



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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KATHRYN BARGER
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT

October 12, 2021

VIA USPS AND E-MAIL

Honorable Megan Wagner
The Superior Court of California
County of Orange
North Justice Center
1275 North Berkeley Avenue, Dept. N10
Fullerton, California 92832

Dear Judge Wagner:

On behalf of the residents of Los Angeles County's Fifth Supervisorial District and specifically the communities of the Antelope Valley, this is to express my strong opposition to the proposed placement of Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) Lawtis Donald Rhoden at a residence located at 48040 25th Street East in Lancaster.

While I understand the court has rendered a decision to conditionally release SVP Rhoden, and the next step in his legal proceedings is to identify suitable placement, there are several unique reasons why the proposed location is not appropriate.

First, over the course of 24 years, SVP Rhoden sexually assaulted five women, most of them minors, in multiple states throughout the country, including in Florida, Tennessee, and California with three of those youth being assaulted while he was on parole. Clearly, SVP Rhoden's heinous tendencies, traversing across the nation, reflect the distances he will travel to find his next victim. Prior to his sentencing for a forceable rape and battery committed in Anaheim, he was known to have assaulted two 14-year-old girls in the City of Bellflower.

Second, Mr. Rhoden's proposed residence is approximately 8 miles from the nearest Sheriff's Station. The location is also a considerable distance from any support programs and essential care services.

Third, the surrounding rural terrain has very spotty and unreliable cell phone and GPS service – which would be highly problematic for round the clock monitoring necessary to ensure community safety.

Fourth, the State of California and Los Angeles County are committed to approaching public policy and government resources through an equity lens. There is nothing equitable about turning this vulnerable community into a dumping ground as a result of SVP CONREP's failure

ANTELOPE VALLEY

42455 10th Street West, Suite 104
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 726-3600

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SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

21943 Plummer Street
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SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

215 N. Marengo Avenue, Suite 120
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to identify suitable placement for SVP's whose county of domicile is Los Angeles County, let alone for those whose county of domicile is outside of our county.

This is the second proposed placement of a SVP in the Antelope Valley in the past several months. SVP Calvin Grassmier was recently placed in the Sun Village/Littlerock area. Any consideration of placing another SVP in the Antelope Valley further traumatizes a marginalized community already dealing with other large-scale public safety concerns including highly organized illegal cannabis grows and water theft.

According to Megan's Law database, Los Angeles County has 13,534 sexual offenders. In contrast, Riverside County, with similar geographic size and rural areas to Los Angeles County, only has 3,462 sexual offenders. That is almost four times the number of sexual offenders.

Taking an informed, just approach that fully addresses and considers the needs and concerns of those who are going to be most affected by this potential placement – the residents – is paramount. The potential placement of SVP Rhoden is clearly becoming an issue of equity and we cannot allow the North County to be a recurrent location for violent criminals who have no nexus or connection to the area.

Finally, there is no nexus between Mr. Rhoden and the Lancaster community. Mr. Rhoden will be living alone, without friends, family, or other support systems, leaving him completely isolated.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the above-referenced points. Please reject the proposed placement of SVP Rhoden in the Antelope Valley.

Sincerely,



KATHRYN BARGER
Supervisor, Fifth District

KB:cmd

- c: Honorable Scott Wilk, Senator, California State Senate, 21st District of California
(Via USPS and e-mail)
Honorable Tom Lackey, Assemblyman, California State Assembly, 36th Assembly
District (Via USPS and e-mail)
Jay Grobeson, Deputy District Attorney, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office
(Via USPS and e-mail)
Dr. Cameron F. Zeidler, SVP CONREP Community Program Director, Liberty
Healthcare (Via e-mail)